

News from Ed Markey

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MARKEY APPALLED N. KOREAN VESSEL LOADED WITH SCUDS FREE TO GO TO YEMEN

Bush Administration Must Answer Many Questions

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee and Co-Chair of the Bipartisan Congressional Task Force on Non-Proliferation, today released the following statement in response to press reports that a North Korean vessel was caught secretly smuggling SCUD missiles to Yemen and has now been freed to make the missile delivery:

"I am appalled that the Bush Administration would allow the North Korean vessel to go free and allow these Scud missiles be transferred to Yemen, a country with active Al Qaeda cells. We have no idea whether these missiles were really intended for the Yemeni military, or whether they would end up in the wrong hands.

"The Bush Administration, in its focus on disarming Iraq, appears to be ignoring other potential threats to our security. Before it let the North Korean vessel go, it should have demanded a full and complete investigation of the circumstances surrounding this entire incident.

"This latest episode with the North Koreans also underscores the need for the Bush Administration to very clearly and publicly state that the U.S. will not go forward with plans to transfer of two light water reactors to North Korea, a country which clearly cannot be trusted with such sensitive technologies.

"With respect to this shipment, we need to have answers to several questions:

- ☐ If this was a legitimate and legal shipment, why did the Yemeni government previously deny that they were receiving such shipments?
- ☐ If Yemen had previously committed not to purchase additional Scuds from North Korea, how does it explain this shipment? Are we to believe that this shipment was back-ordered, or that it was on a slow boat to Yemen and should therefore be 'grandfathered'?
- ☐ If this was a legal shipment, what explains all of the cloak and dagger shenanigans by the North Koreans on the boat?
- ☐ Why was the North Korean vessel flying a Cambodian flag?
- ☐ Why was the real name of the ship painted out?
- ☐ Why did the ship's crew refuse to halt and heed warning shots from the Spanish warships, forcing them to be boarded?
- ☐ Why did the North Korean crew lie about their nationality?
- ☐ Why were the Scud missiles hidden under bags of cement?
- ☐ Scuds are easily modified to carry chemical or biological warheads. Who in this Administration is going to certify that the next Scud missile aimed at U.S. soldiers defending our interests in the Middle East was not one of these, so briefly secured on the high seas, yet so cavalierly released despite the obvious subterfuge surrounding their proliferation?"

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